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Pankaj Oudhia's Notes on Aconite napellus, Linn, h.f.br.i., i. 28. [Kirtikar, Kanhoba Ranchoddas, and Baman Das Basu. "Indian Medicinal Plants." Indian Medicinal Plants. (1918)]

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Pankaj Oudhia

Introduction

Based on Ethnobotanical surveys since year 1990 in different parts of India Pankaj Oudhia has documented vital information about Medicinal Plants mentioned in the famous publication by Kirtikar and Basu (1918). Through this research document Pankaj Oudhia has tried to present original document with additional notes. For complete paper with pictures, Interactive Tables, Video and Audio clips please visit pankajoudhia.com

For original publication by Kirtikar and Basu (1918) please visit <https://archive.org/details/indianmedicinalp01kirt>

A. Napellus, Linn, h.f.br.i., i. 28.

Vern. : — Dudhiabish ; Katbish ; Mitha-Zahar; Tilia cachang ;

Moliri (Kashmir and Panjab Himalayan names). The root in

Kashmir is called Ban-bal-ndg, Vasa nabhi (Tel.); Dudhio

Vachanag (GuzA

[Pankaj Oudhia's Comment: In India more than 30 species are known as Mitha-Zahar including this species. Similarly over 50 species are known as Dudhia Bish]

Habitat: — Temperate, Alpine Himalaya, from 10,000 feet to

the highest limit of vegetation in the N.-W. Provinces.

[Pankaj Oudhia's Comment: Efforts were made to cultivate this species in Central India with little success.]

An annual erect herb, starting from an elongated tuberous conical rootstock. Root 2 — 4 in. long, and sometimes as much as an inch in thickness. This root tapers off in a long tail, while numerous branching rootlets spring from its side. If dug up in the summer, it will be found that a second and a younger root (occasionally a third) is attached to it, near its summit, by a very short branch and is growing out of it on one side. This second root has a bud at the top which is destined to produce the stem of the next season. It attains its maximum development at the latter part of the year, the parent root, meanwhile, becoming shrivelled and decayed. The dried root is more or less conical or tapering, enlarged, knotty at the summit, which is crowned with the base of the stem. It is from 2 — 3 or 4 inches long, and at the top from \ — 1 in. thick. A transverse section of a sound root shows a pure white central portion (pith) which is many-sided and has at each of its projecting angles a thin fibro-vascular bundle. (Fliückiger and Hanbury). Stem : — Stiff upright herbaceous, simple, 3-4ft. high, clothed at its upper half with spreading dark-green leaves, which

are paler on their underside; glabrous or slightly pubescent, often decumbent. Leaves 3 — 5 or more inches long, nearly half consisting of the channelled petiole, palmati-partite ; very variable in size. The blade which has a roundish outline, is divided down to the petiole into three principal segments, of which the lateral are sub-divided into two or even three, the lowest being smaller and less regular than the others. The segments, which are trifid, are finally cut into 2 or 5 strap-shaped pointed lobes. The leaves are usually glabrous and are deeply impressed on their upper side by veins which run with but few branchings to the tip of every lobe.

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The uppermost leaves are more simple than the lower, and gradually pass into the bracts of the beautiful raceme of dull blue helmet-shaped flowers which crown the stem. The taste of the leaves is at first mawkish, but afterwards persistently burning.

The taste of the fresh root has a sharp odour of radish which disappears in drying. Its taste which is at first sweetish soon

becomes alarmingly acrid, accompanied with a sensation of tingling and numbness. (Fluck. and Hanb.). Flowers f-lin., long. " Bright or dull greenish blue" (Hk. f., and Thorns.)- Sepals 5, petaloid, posterior (helmet) vaulted, the rest flat. Petals 2-5, two posterior clawed ; limb hooded and enclosed in the helmet. Helmet shallow, tapering to a slender beak, 3 times as long as In gh. Racem es : — Simple, few— or many-flowered, or sparingly compound. Bracts entire or trifid. Stamens many. Follicles 3-5 in. in Indian forms ; hairy, sessile. Seeds many. Testa smooth. This is a very variable plant.

" Recent investigations into the Chemistry of the Indian Aconites, and my own examination of a great mass of herbarium material, many times richer than that which was at the disposal of the authors of the Flora Indica, as well as histological studies concerning the root- tubers of the Indian Aconites, have convinced me that the European Aconitum Napellus does not occur in India, either in its typical form or what we might be justified in calling varieties of it." (Annals of the Royal Botanic Garden, Calcutta, Vol X, p. 121. ' The Aconites of India ' by L)r Otto Stapf).

Part used :— The root.

[Pankaj Oudhia's Comment: All parts of this species are used in Traditional Healing. Even the insects infesting this species are used in Traditional Entomotherapy. The reference literature mentions much about medicinal properties of its roots. In Indian Traditional Healing other parts are used to enhance the performances of roots in the Herbal Formulations.]

Use ; — Its febrifuge and tonic properties are mentioned in all

works on Materia Medica.

[Pankaj Oudhia's Comment: This species is used as important ingredient in hundreds of Formulations. In many Formulations it is used even as nonary ingredient in order to enhance the performances of other ingredients. Most of the Traditional Formulations having this species are waiting for proper documentation and validation through clinical trials. The young Healers have modified the Traditional Formulations by adding new herbs from hotter parts of India.]

Citation

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